

ADVENTURES OF  
THE GALAXY RANGERS™

# COSMIC IMPOSTOR



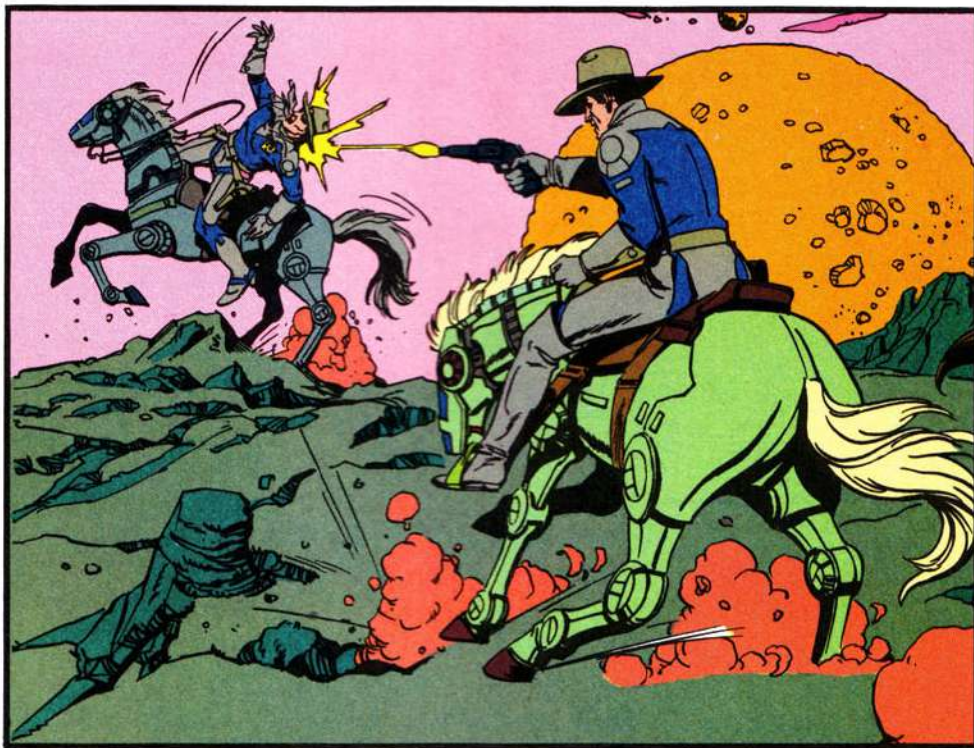






# COSMIC IMPOSTOR

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Illustrated by Fred Carrillo



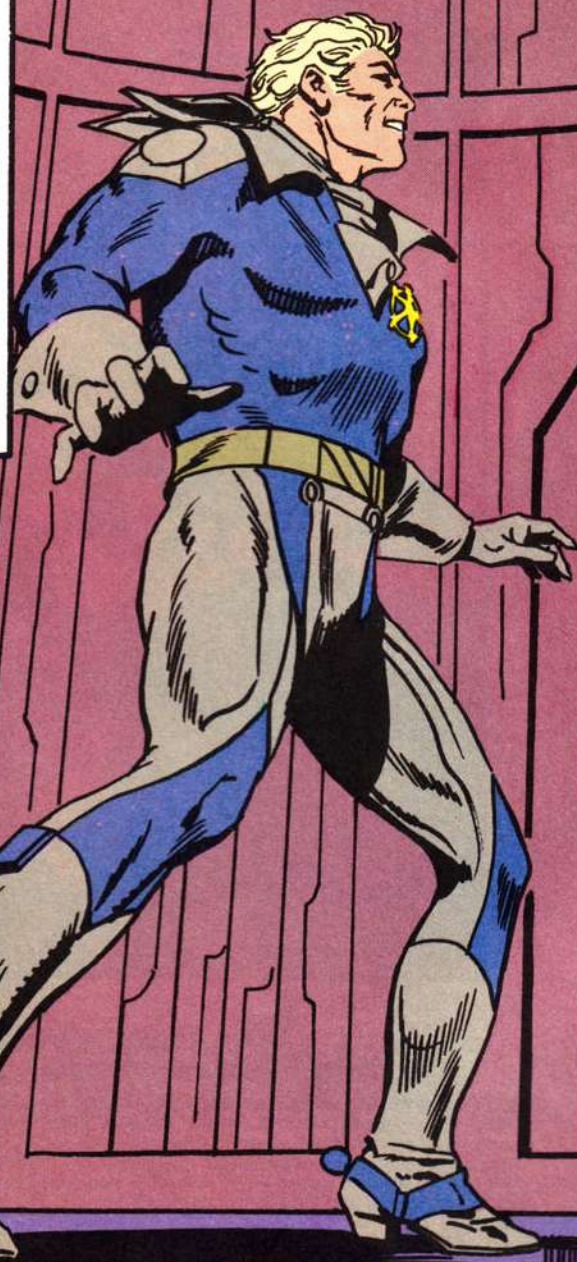
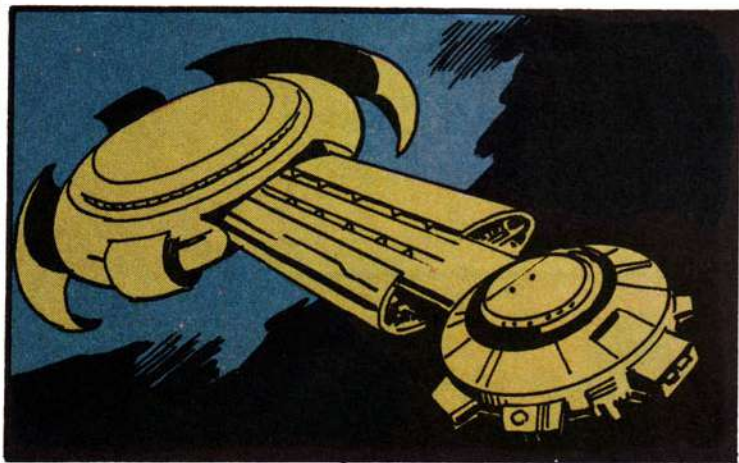
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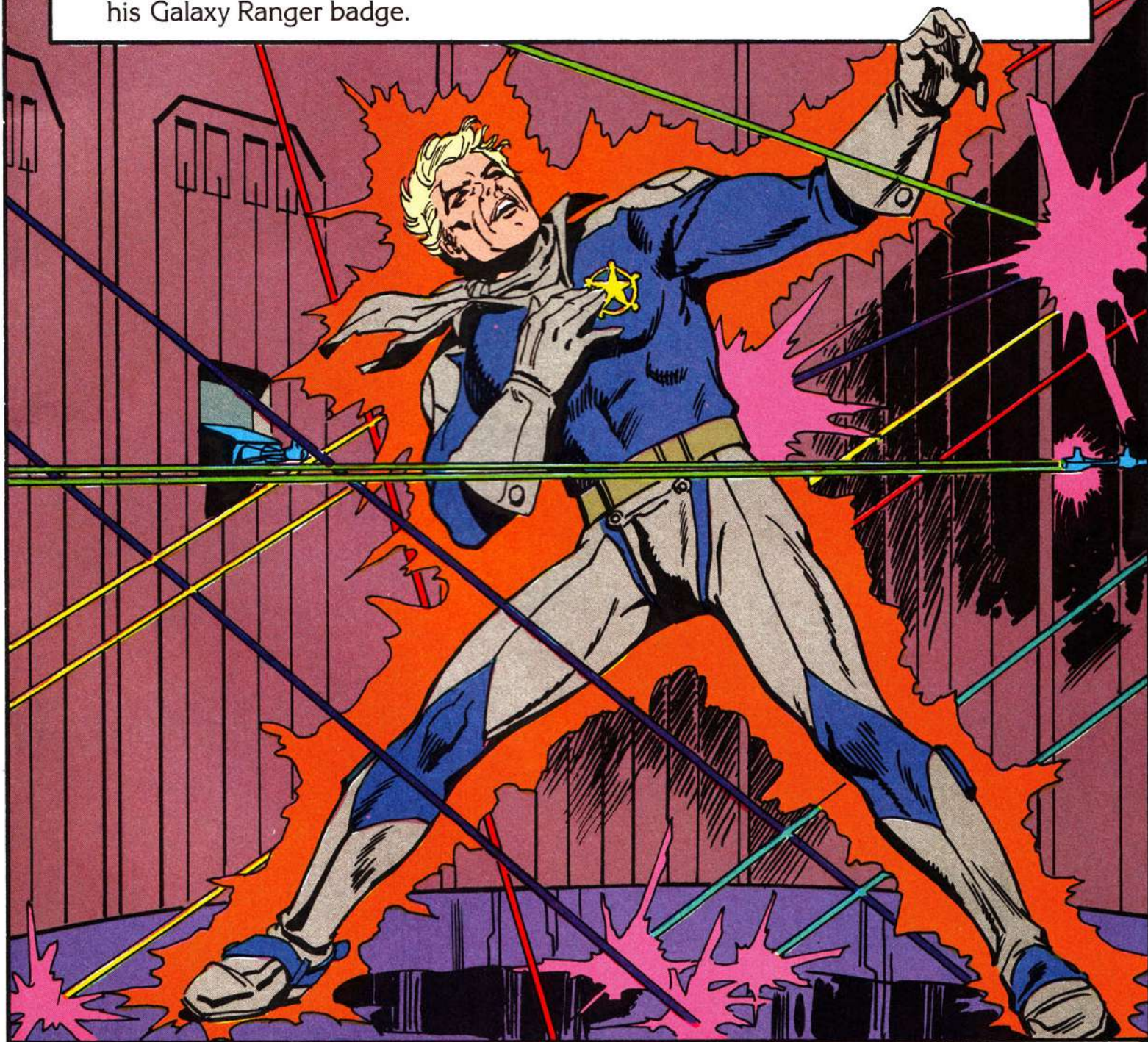
In a training room aboard the BETA Orbital Space Station, Galaxy Ranger Shane Gooseman stood ready for danger. Even though this was only a Ranger training session, his senses bristled with excitement.





As laser cannons fired at Goose he dodged their burning rays. But one bounced off a metal wall and struck him from behind.

"Arrgh!" Goose cried out, more from defeat than from pain. Quickly he touched his Galaxy Ranger badge.





Instantly Goose's Supertrooper biodefenses cut in. He began to glow and reflect light like a mirror. He bounced back the laser beams until they destroyed some of the cannons.

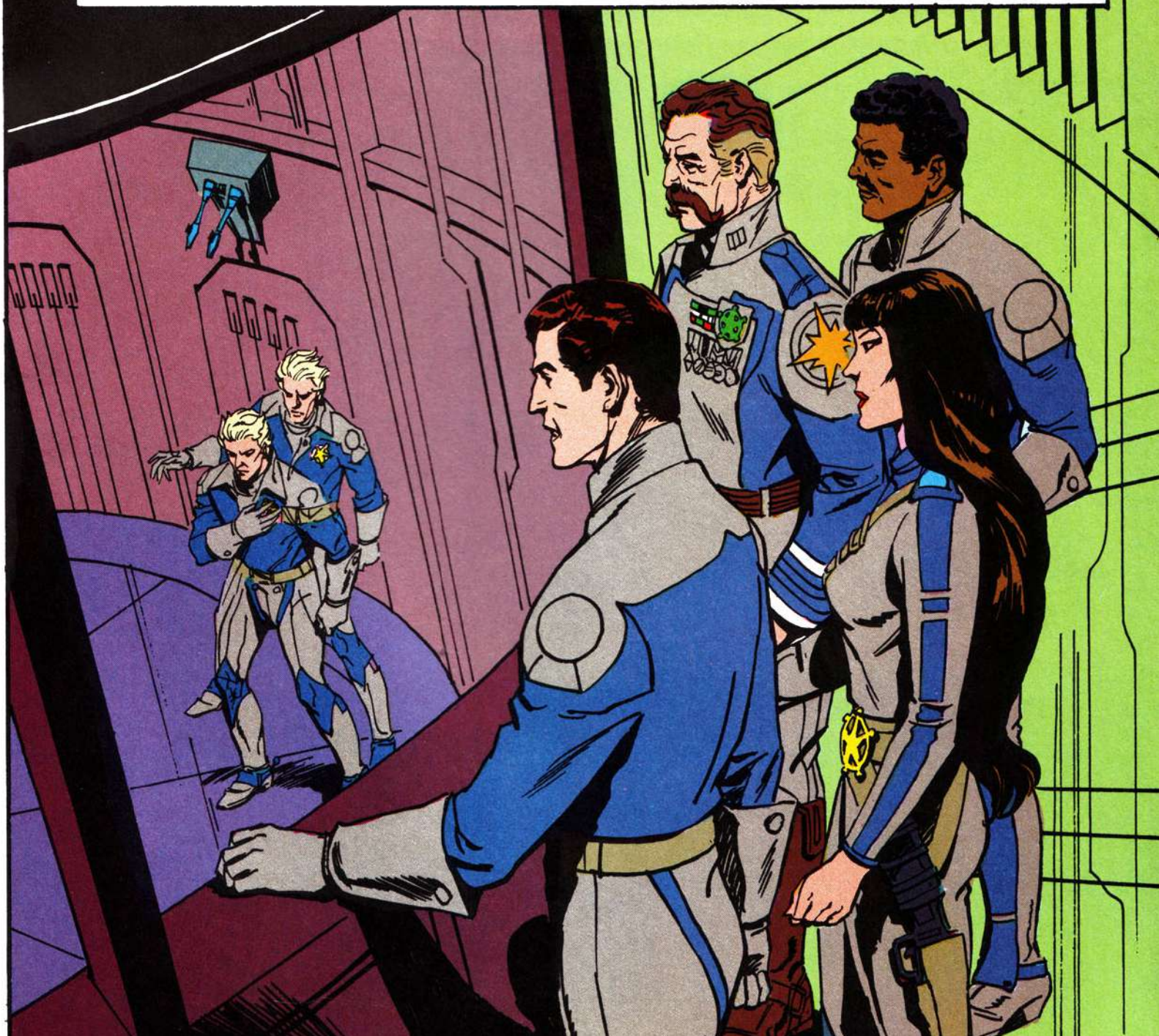
While watching from an observation window high above the training room, Commander Walsh said to Captain Zachary Foxx, "We'd better call a halt to this training session before Goose wrecks the room."





"Good show," said Foxx as two other Galaxy Rangers, Niko and Doc, joined him and Walsh at the observation window.

"Yes," said Walsh. "But there is still great mistrust of Goose among the Board of Leaders."

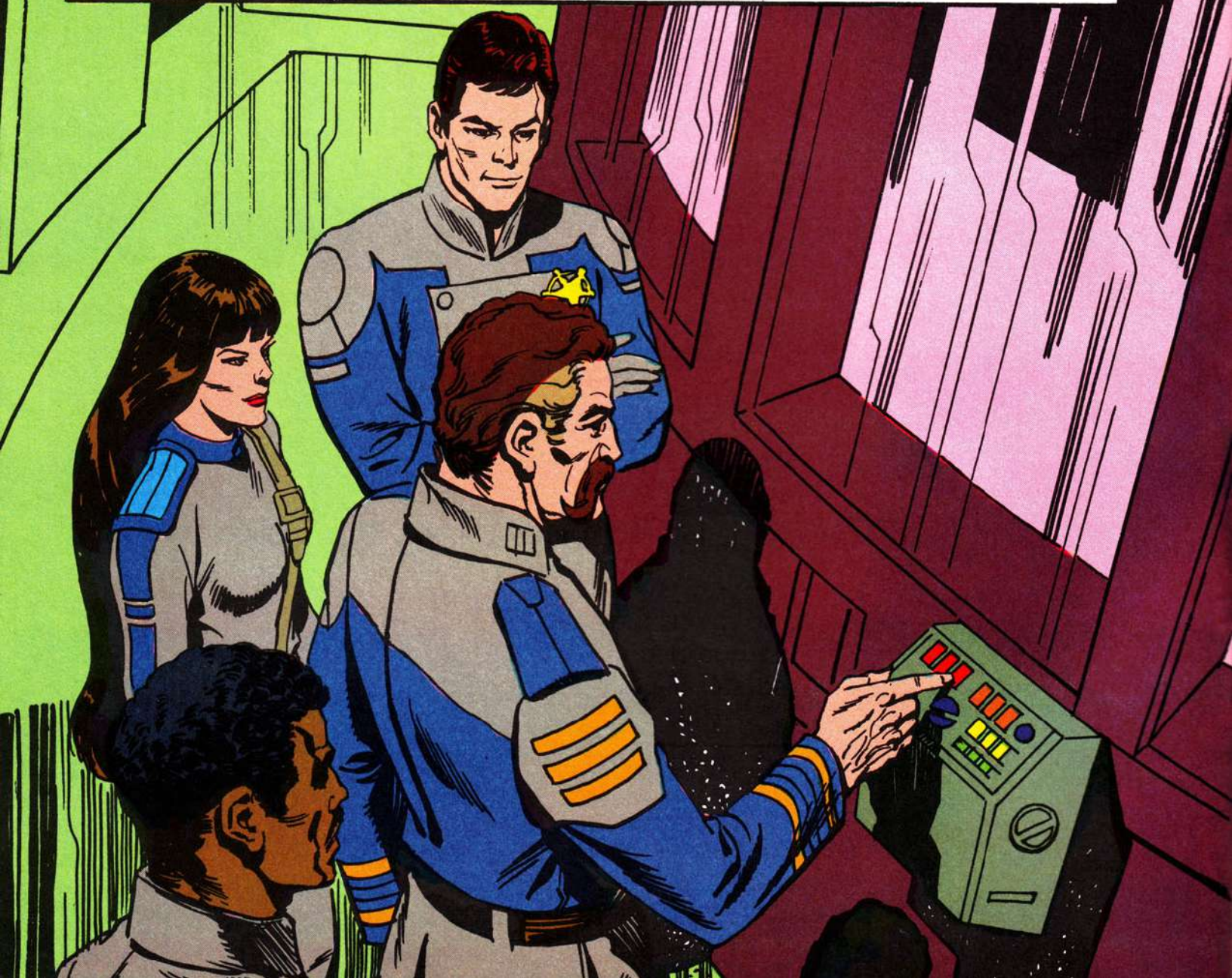




The Commander continued. "Shane Gooseman is the only genetically engineered Supertrooper with human compassion. But I guess the Board has reason to fear he'll join the escaped renegade Supertroopers—wherever in space they might be."

"I trust Goose," said Foxx quietly. "I'd trust him with my life."

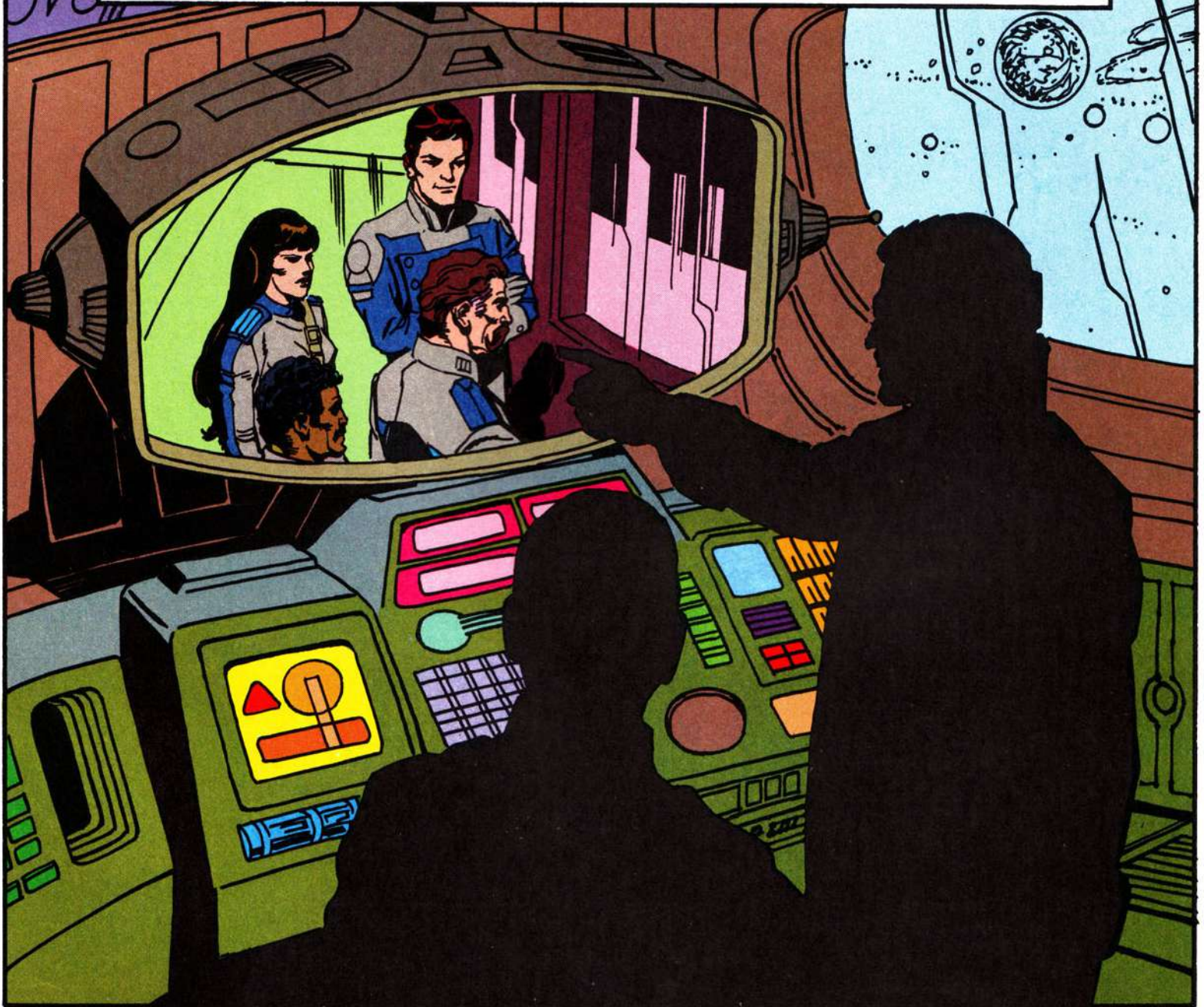
"Let's hope you don't have to," said Walsh. "But if you do, let's hope you're right."





Elsewhere in space Goose and the Supertroopers were the subject of another conversation.

"Remember, my Chameleoid friend," said a snarling voice through clenched teeth, "the only reason I'm using you and your super-changing power is because I can't find any real Supertroopers!"





"You may be the greatest space outlaw in the whole galaxy, Lazarus Slade," said the shape-changing alien, his eerie voice echoing through the corridors of the rover craft, "but my ability to disguise myself has already proved its worth."



"I showed you which planetary officials to impersonate," hissed Slade. "I told you how to find out the shipping route of the energy crystals between Andor and Kirwin. You'd be nothing but a shapeless blob without my planning!"





Later, back at the BETA Orbital Space Station, Commander Walsh was briefing Zachary Foxx. "This mission," he explained, "is nothing more than guard duty for that energy crystal transfer between Andor and Kirwin. But I'm still getting flak about Goose from the Board of Leaders."

"This is a Ranger assignment...and he is a Galaxy Ranger," replied Foxx. "Goose comes along!"



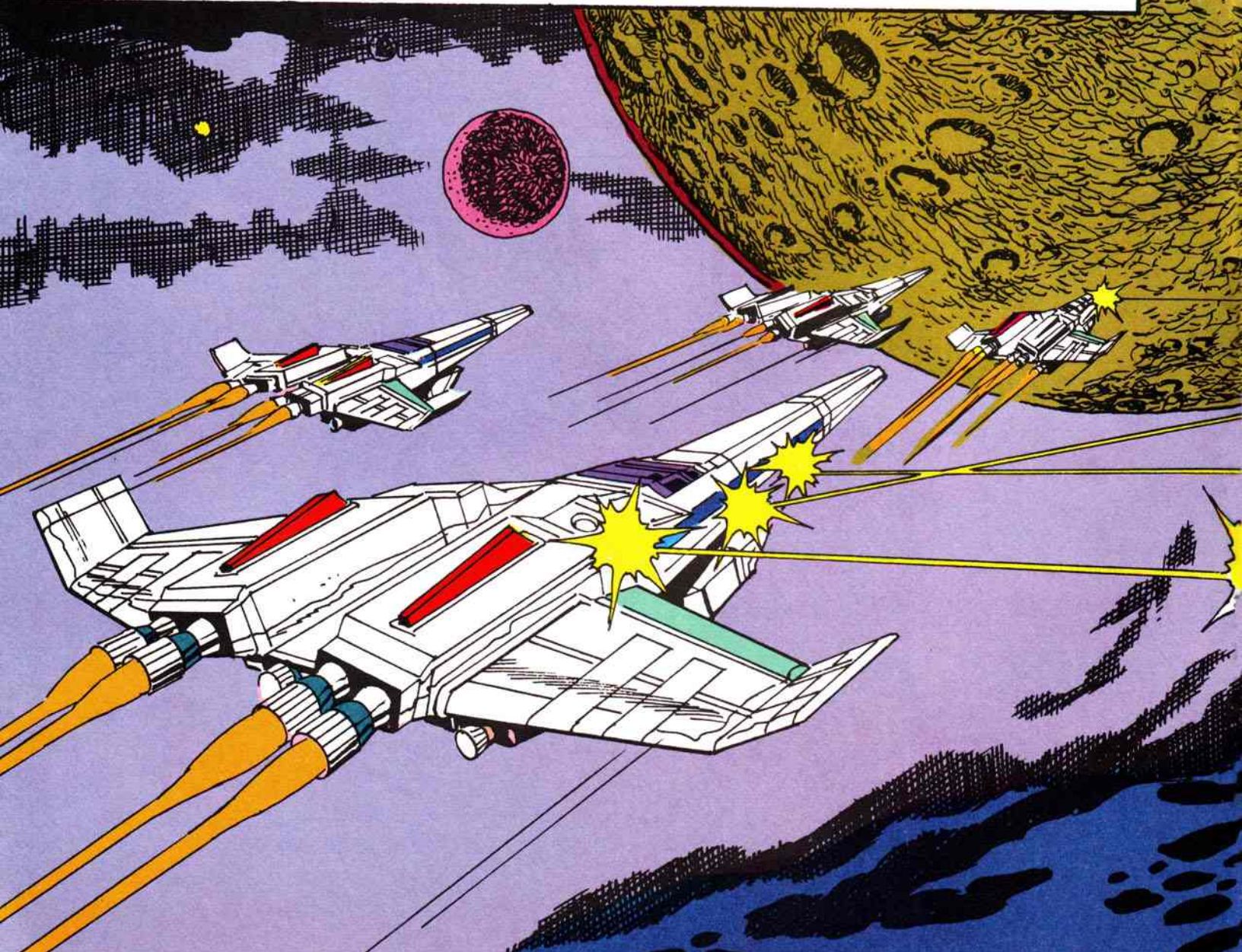


After hours of speeding through hyperspace, the Rangers approached the planet Andor.

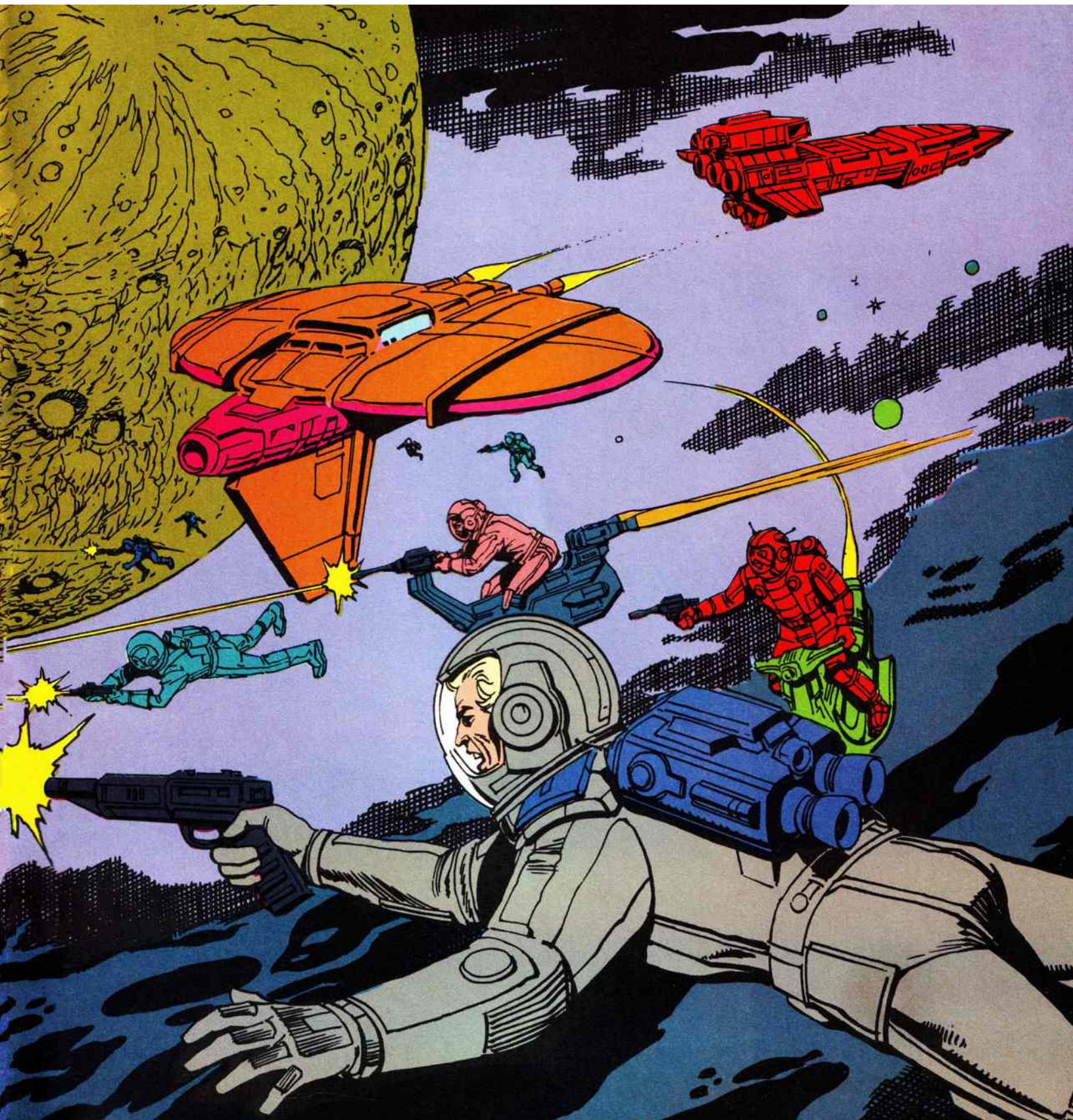
"Great space!" cried Doc. "That's Lazarus Slade's ship! He has hijacked the energy shipment!"

"We're under attack ourselves," warned Zachary, "an attack led by a..."

"By a Supertrooper," Goose finished in an astonished whisper.



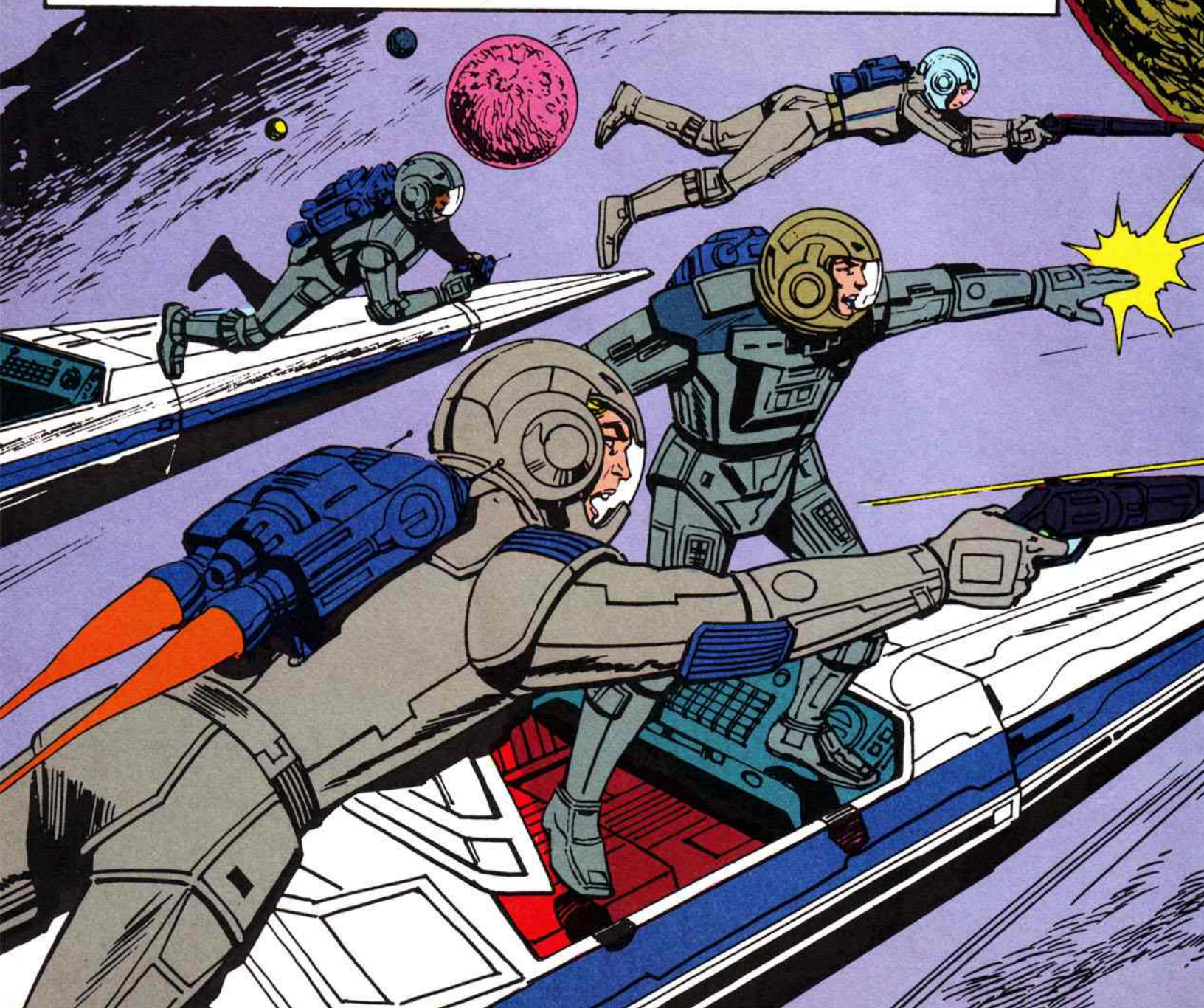






In the silence of the endless vacuum the Galaxy Rangers defended the energy shipment.

"A Supertrooper!" Zachary thought as he fired energy balls from his bionic left arm. "Goose must know him, since all the Supertroopers trained together. Goose is fighting as gallantly as the other Rangers. Maybe this will prove to the Board once and for all that he's loyal."





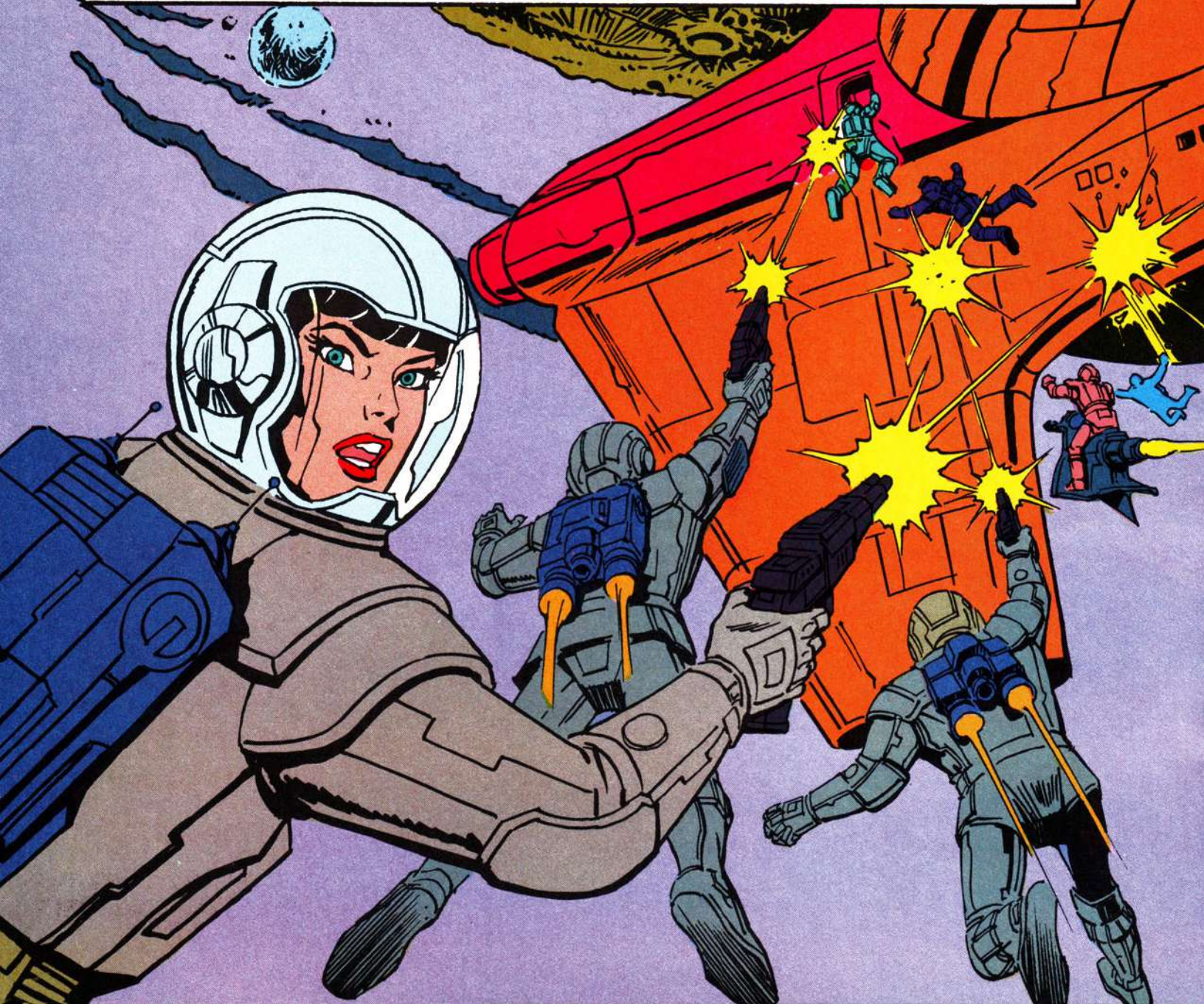




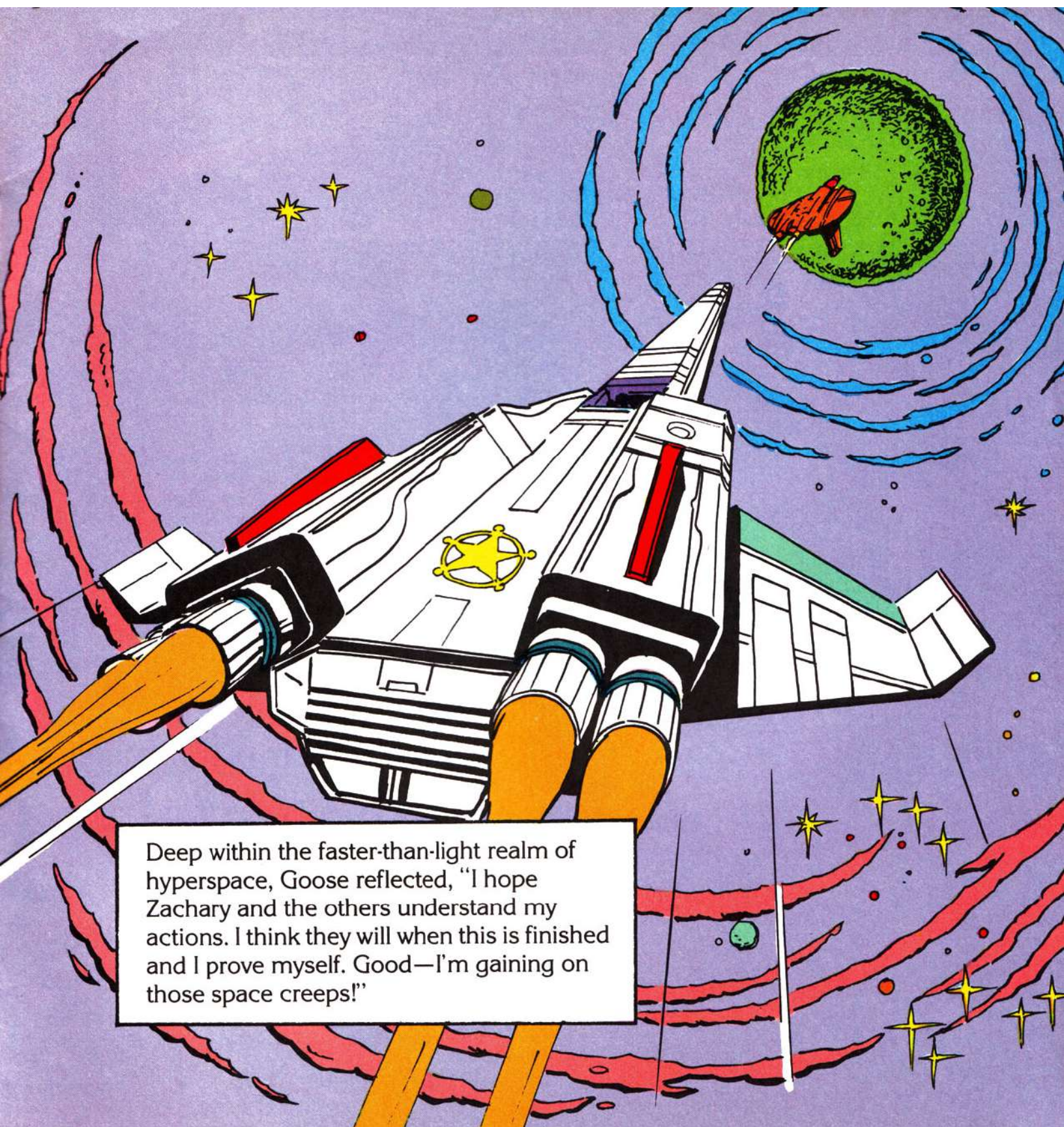
As the space outlaws clambered aboard Slade's ship, the Rangers fired blast after blast.

"We saved the energy shipment," Doc said, "but the outlaws are getting away."

"Goose!" Niko's voice crackled through her transmitter. "Where's Goose?"







Deep within the faster-than-light realm of hyperspace, Goose reflected, "I hope Zachary and the others understand my actions. I think they will when this is finished and I prove myself. Good—I'm gaining on those space creeps!"



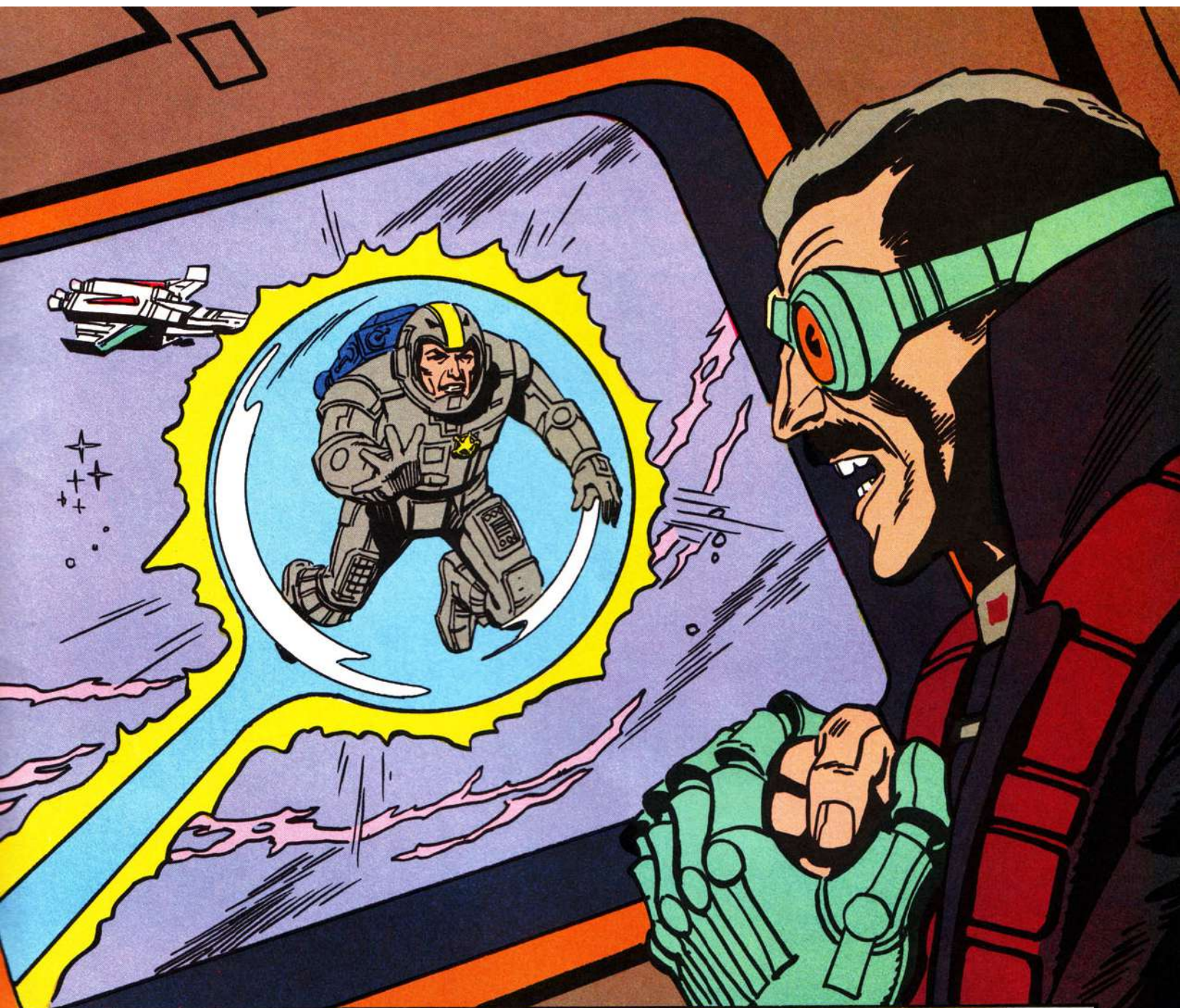
Aboard Slade's ship Goose's activity had not gone unnoticed.

"You fool!" the Chameleoid screamed at Slade. "We abandoned the energy loot and now one of those cursed Rangers is closing in."

"Watch your so-called mouth," Slade shouted back. "Everything is going exactly as I expected!"







"I knew," Slade said, gloating, "that the Ranger called Goose would come after a 'Supertrooper' on his own. And look! He space-walked over here to avoid detection, and I've captured him in my vacuum cage. Ha, ha, ha!"



Sometime later, on the rocky surface of an asteroid, the Galaxy Rangers welcomed back their missing member.

"Here he comes," Zachary's voice said over the Rangers' helmet communicators. "We read Goose's coded rendezvous right on the money."





"Nice going, Goose," said Doc. "That was good tracking you did to learn where Slade was holed up. Now that you've led us here, let's get those outlaws right away."

As the Rangers charged, the phony Goose laughed to himself. "Ha! They believe that I, the clever Chameleoid, am really their partner!"

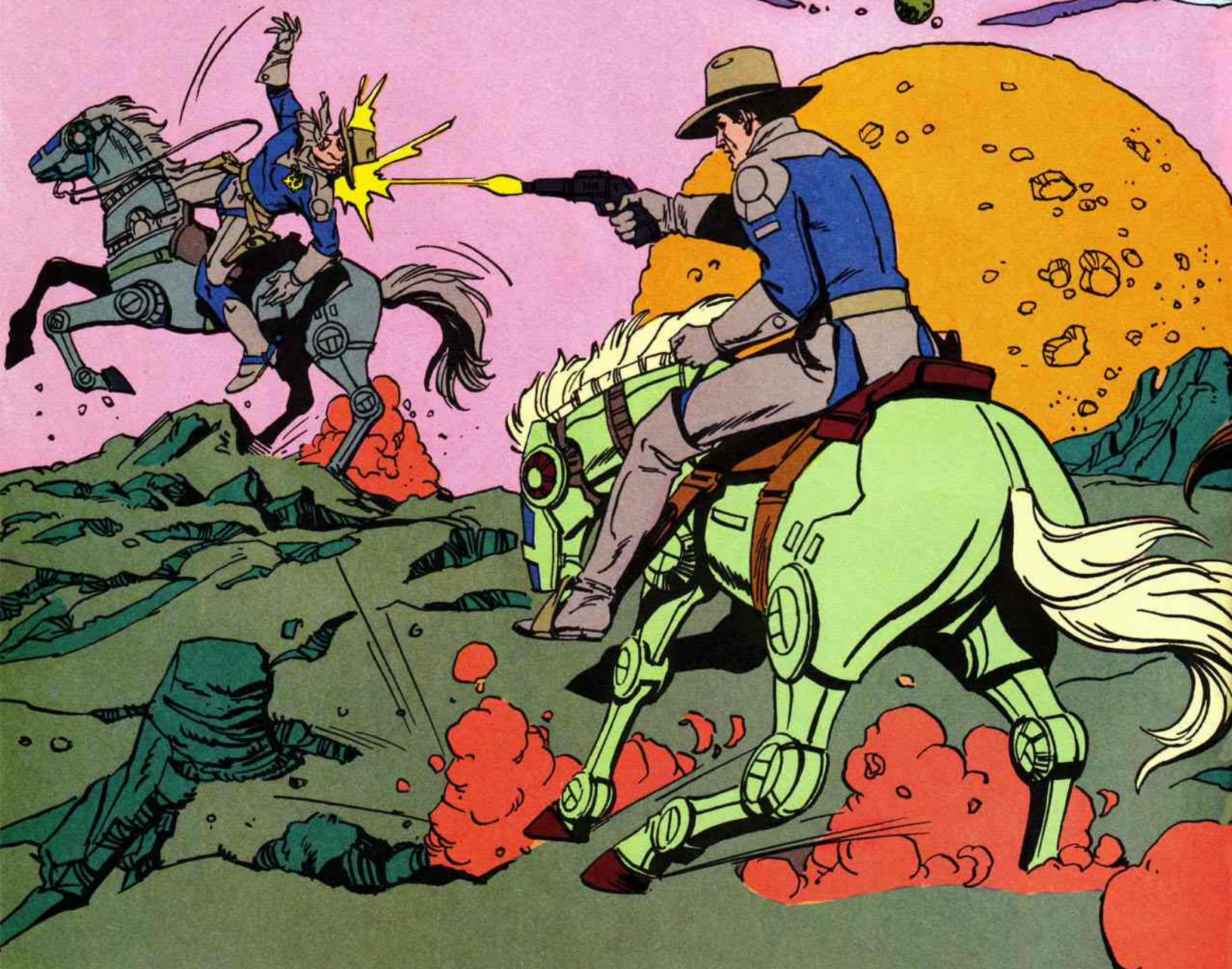




But as the Rangers closed in on the ridge, Niko screamed, "Doc, look! Zachary is gunning down Goose!"

"It isn't Goose," Foxx said. "He's an impostor who's leading us into a trap!"

"He's right, Niko," Doc said. "This laser barrage is only a holographic projection. Slade and his pirates are long gone."









Niko asked angrily, "Who and what is he really, Zachary? What's happened to the real Goose? How'd you know this one was an impostor?"

"He's a Chameleoid, Niko—a creature who hates his own form so much that he imitates the forms of others," Foxx explained. "He changed himself without touching his Ranger badge or being hit first by lasers. So I knew he wasn't really Goose. As for what's happened to the real Goose..."

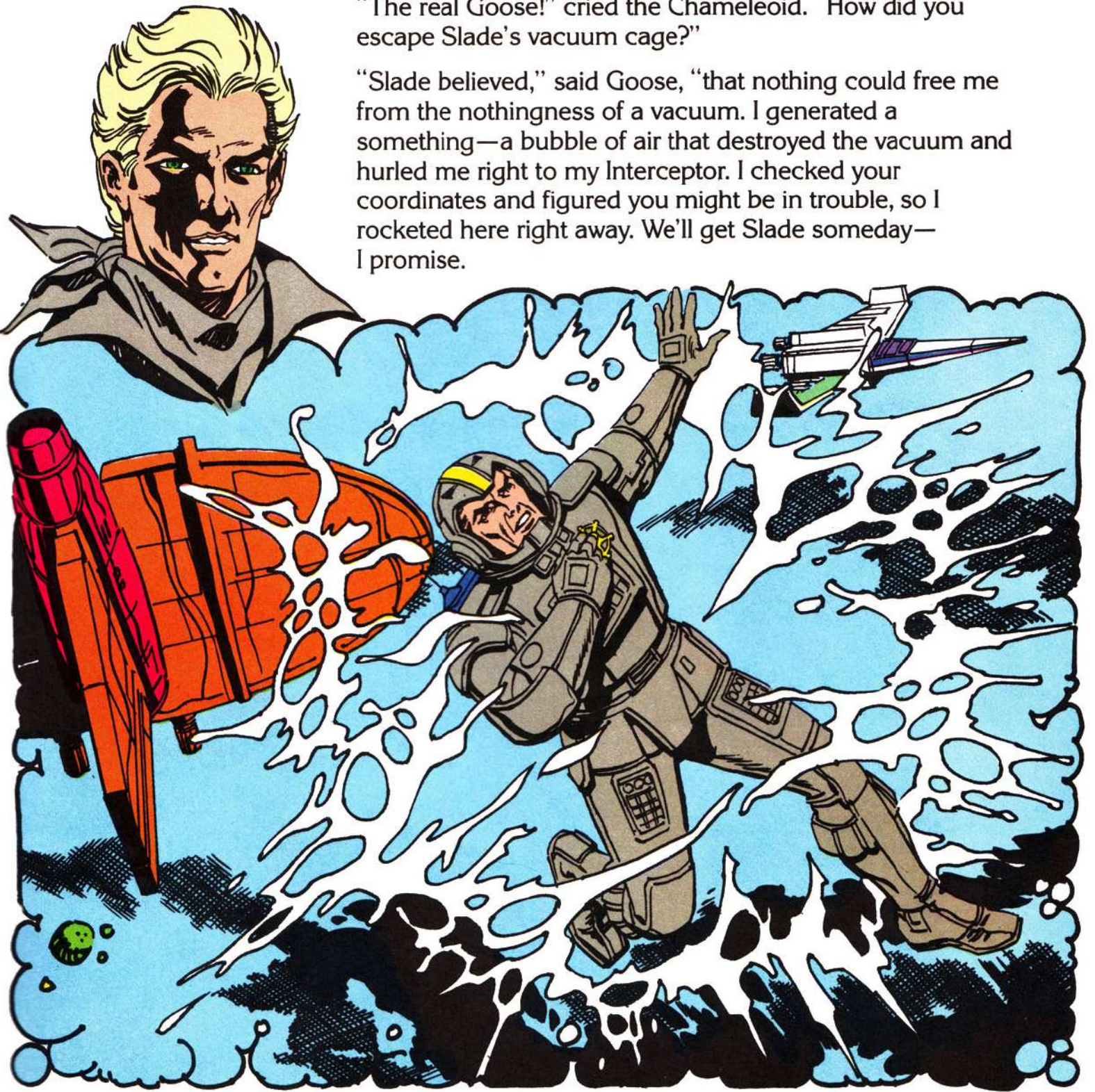
I'LL TELL YOU  
WHAT'S  
HAPPENED!





"The real Goose!" cried the Chameleoid. "How did you escape Slade's vacuum cage?"

"Slade believed," said Goose, "that nothing could free me from the nothingness of a vacuum. I generated a something—a bubble of air that destroyed the vacuum and hurled me right to my Interceptor. I checked your coordinates and figured you might be in trouble, so I rocketed here right away. We'll get Slade someday—I promise.

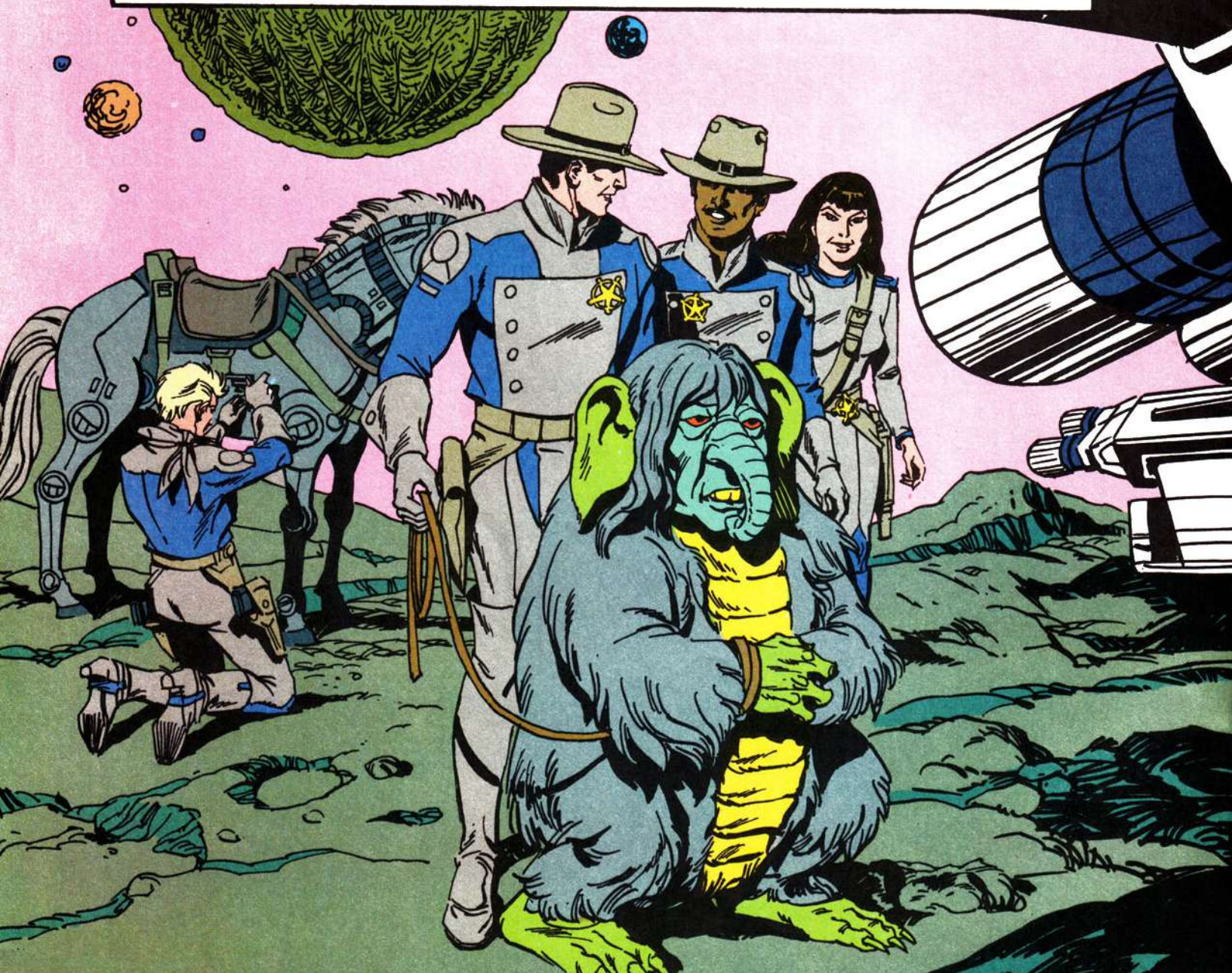




"The Chameleoid can't change unless someone gives him an idea," said Goose, "so he'll be easy to take to jail. In the meantime I'm making adjustments on Triton so he won't be fooled again."

"Zachary," whispered Doc, "how do we know if this is the real Goose?"

"Easy, Doc," said Zachary as he led the prisoner away. "Only the real Goose could be clever enough to escape from a trap like Slade's vacuum cage!"









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A century from now, alien ambassadors come to Earth and ask the World Federation for help against a syndicate of space outlaws. The federation agrees, forming an organization called BETA—Bureau of Extra-Terrestrial Affairs—to deal with the menace. In exchange, the grateful ambassadors provide BETA with the means of journeying to the stars.

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